

WWF Statements - 34th Session FAO-COFI Submitted January 27, 2021

OPENING STATEMENT

WWF would like to thank the FAO for inviting us to participate in this session of the Committee on Fisheries. As long-standing Observers, we appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this Session, which will address a number of issues that are high on our agenda.

WWF acknowledges the efforts underway globally to address the state of the world's fisheries and the commitment shown by the FAO members and member organizations to implement the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, now celebrating its 25th anniversary.

However, the ocean is experiencing unprecedented and cumulative pressures - driven in large part by unsustainable production and consumption. The interdependent crises of biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation and climate change require urgent and immediate global, regional and local action. This is further compounded by the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has impacted negatively on the world's economy, food security and livelihoods, with severe repercussions on the fisheries and aquaculture sector.

WWF remains deeply concerned about the current fisheries management model, where a large number of stocks are being unsustainably exploited. Moreover, the overfishing fronts are multiplying; we are fishing more, and expanding fishing areas deeper and wider than ever before. This is severely hindering advancements on the 2030 Agenda's Sustainable Development Goal 14 to protect and sustainably use the oceans to advance sustainable development and hampering the critical role sustainably managed fisheries could play in building the resilience of the ocean and its dependent societies, particularly in the face of a changing and erratic climate.

There is an urgent need to change the current production and consumption model that is damaging the health and resilience of the oceans, overexploiting fish populations and eroding the habitats and ecosystems that sustain healthy fish populations and biodiversity. This is already increasing the vulnerability of communities, eroding societies and threatening food security in many parts of the world. The coming decade is crucial to step up global ambition for nature, climate and people; investing in the recovery, protection and resilience of our ocean and dependent societies is essential to secure national economies, advance ocean-related mitigation and adaptation solutions and support the delivery of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

For WWF, a few overarching themes are key to achieve sustainability in fisheries and we are pleased to see that these are in line with the 2021 COFI Declaration:

- 1. Advancing integrated approaches and solutions to address the interdependent crises of biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation and climate change, including by implementing an ecosystem-approach to fisheries, where fish are seen as a part of the ecosystem rather than a resource for extraction.** This should include prioritising the restoration and regeneration of coastal habitats, as a powerful means of addressing biodiversity loss, delivering sustainable development

opportunities to coastal communities and tackling climate change. The IPCC and others have suggested that policy coordination and integrated management are considered important climate change adaptation and ocean governance responses.

2. **Changing the rules of the fisheries sector at all levels.** In this context, States and other actors must define new and sustainable business models that will transform the way fishing is done, as well as repair the weak governance that characterizes fishing and its trade, making full cooperation among states to increase transparency along the value chain a standard operating practice and reduce or eliminate the incentives that encourage overcapacity, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and facilitates human rights abuses.
3. **Recognising the need to scale up investments to support the aspirations of, and de-marginalise, coastal communities.** Coastal fisheries play a critical role in delivering nutritional and income security to small scale fisheries communities across the world. For many countries food is a national security issue and policy makers need to be aware of the trade-offs and potential consequences of particular policy pathways and the importance of protecting and restoring the habitats and target species that sustain coastal fisheries. Investments are urgently needed to support community enterprises, foster gender inclusion and provide financial incentives to coastal communities recognizing the vital role that small-scale fisheries play for food security, employment and political stability.
4. **Stressing the need for partnerships between governments, communities and/or other non-state actors to deliver nearshore conservation with greater urgency.** This can include area-based management tools such as no-take reserves for spawning grounds, locally managed marine areas, collaborative fisheries management areas, and managed coastal and marine areas.

34th Session of the FAO-COFI – WWF statements by Agenda Item:

Agenda item 4: Status, trends, emerging issues and innovative responses to ensure responsible and sustainable fisheries and aquaculture: Building back better.

WWF believes that the increase in fisheries classified as overfished by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the growing gulf between intensely managed and weakly managed fisheries, necessitates a new course for fisheries management and policy in the 21st century.

The SOFIA report continues to highlight relative increases in global capture fisheries and aquaculture production, as well as continued global growth in food fish consumption. The report shows that the percentage of fisheries classified as overfished continues to increase and is now 34.2% of all assessed fisheries worldwide. Only a decade ago, this percentage was a quarter, and in 1974, the baseline for the report, 10% of assessed stocks were overfished.

The coronavirus pandemic has had wide-ranging effects on fisheries worldwide, exacerbating challenges to sustainable management of fish stocks. Many weaknesses have been exposed, highlighting the need to develop a more modern approach to fisheries, including the elimination of harmful subsidies and illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing. Production from aquaculture continues to exceed wild capture fisheries, with 54% of the global production of aquatic organisms coming from aquaculture. The sector is growing rapidly, and the impacts of feed production for aquaculture – which comes from both marine and terrestrial environments – are widespread across the planet, contributing to habitat conversion, overfishing and climate change.

WWF urges all States to recognise that COVID 19 disease on boats and in fish processing plants is a serious threat and to ensure all fishers and fishworkers have adequate safeguards in the workplace. WWF commends those countries that have put in place recovery measures and stimulus packages to provide aid and financial relief to the fishing sector. WWF is concerned by the winding back of a number of compliance and monitoring measures due to COVID and calls for a timetable for the reinstatement of COVID appropriate equivalent or stronger monitoring, control and compliance measures, with greater use of digital and electronic technologies.

WWF is further extremely concerned by the abbreviated format of virtual RFMOs and other fisheries management meetings, with the delay and deferral of many conservation measures decisions and calls for the creation of virtual mechanisms to ensure progress on the full suite of issues.

WWF believes on the urgent need to prioritise managing fish stocks in developing countries, where many are likely depleted, and where small-scale fisheries contribute significantly to food security, employment and economic development. This means policies that work for both people and nature: ensuring access and equity to those who are most vulnerable and restoring and rebuilding ocean health for the long term.

Agenda Item 7: Contributions of fisheries and aquaculture to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

In order to achieve a healthy ocean that benefits people, especially those vulnerable communities most dependent upon ocean resources for food security and livelihoods, and achieving the objectives of SDG14, it is crucial that fisheries are managed in an integrated ecosystem-based approach with the long term sustainability of fisheries and the livelihoods and food security of local and vulnerable communities at its heart.

This includes managing the ocean and its resources in a holistic manner, to ensure decisions are adopted that consider the interrelatedness of habitats, broader ecosystem services and fisheries and that ensure no activity is taking place at the expense of the health of the ocean.

WWF urges governments to adopt a holistic approach to ocean management, inter alia to halt the decline of coral reefs, mangrove forests, and seagrass beds, which are key to securing coastal resilience, food security and to adapt, mitigate and reduce the increasing risks from the impacts of climate change and natural disasters, as these ecosystems provide food and livelihoods for hundreds of millions of people, especially in developing countries and vulnerable communities.

WF also urges governments to establish spatial measures to protect spawning and nursery grounds for fish species important to food security and livelihoods, as well as for internationally traded species, as a fundamental element of fisheries management. WWF calls on the global community to prioritise support for adaptive fisheries management capacity in those geographies where fish provide nutritional security for low income and vulnerable communities. In 2016 we learned that 629 million people around the world are both reliant on fish for food and are vulnerable to micronutrient deficiencies, with Asia Pacific home to the four most vulnerable countries, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Malaysia. These countries are among those most at risk from climate change impacts reducing fisheries productivity and a 'fish forward' approach for these countries needs to be factored into ODA priorities and into National Adaptation Plans.

With nearly half-a-billion of the world's undernourished people living in Asia-Pacific – and with the 2030 deadline for Zero Hunger just a decade away –the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) are calling for urgent actions to address hunger and malnutrition in all its forms, and to place nutrition at the heart of social protection programmes. <http://www.fao.org/asiapacific/news/detail-events/en/c/1254771/> . There are at least 10 high level meetings in 2021 focused on Food and land and sea use, and the challenge of hunger and the provision of nutritional security.

Agenda Item 8: Supporting small-scale and artisanal fisheries

WWF is keen to continue being a partner in supporting the implementation of the FAO SSF Guidelines, especially through its new global Initiative "Accelerating Coastal Community-led Conservation". This Initiative adopts a three-pronged strategy with the aim of scaling community-led conservation in partnership with local and regional organizations. More specifically, the strategy is focused on scaling up co-management in national policies, scaling out (replicating) successes (e.g. around participatory SSF data monitoring, alternative livelihoods and community enterprises, women and financial inclusion) and scaling deep via

supporting capacity development and bridging institutions in six priority seascapes (Mediterranean, LAC, Coral Triangle, Northern Indian Ocean, Southwest Indian Ocean and Pacific). [COFI 2020/6 and COFI 2020/Inf. 12.2.]

WWF welcomes the efforts made to update the global study “Illuminating Hidden Harvest” as compiling and consolidating data on SSF and its importance for livelihoods is key to “de-marginalize” this sector and make it a core component of a sustainable and inclusive blue economy. [COFI 2020/inf. 12.1]

WWF recommends that that FAO engages with the CBD and that data from Illuminating Hidden Harvest (e.g. percentage of total SSF catch governed by co-management) feeds the FAO engagement into the CBD post-2020 framework discussions around the CBD post-2020 framework so that co-management and other types of community-managed areas are considered effective tools for coastal protection and can be accounted for, as OECM, in the delivery of the 2030 target. [COFI 2020/inf. 12.1]

WWF encourages States to include participatory data collection (with fishermen and community members) to monitor SSF and the level of implementation of the guidelines (currently the methodology relies on fisheries experts, governments, consultants). There are existing ICT tools co-designed with fishermen - such as the [Abalobi](#) monitoring App co-developed with communities, Open Data Kit promoted by Blue Ventures in the SW Indian Ocean or the spawning potential surveys developed in the Pacific - which are successfully achieving the dual objective of bringing reliable data and engaging fishermen in the process of monitoring and managing SSF. [COFI 2020/inf. 12.1]

WWF would like to promote the SSF Hub (www.ssfhub.org) created jointly by EDF, WWF, WCS, Blue Ventures and other partners as a collaborative space to mainstream and support the SSF Guidelines.

WWF welcomes the recognition of the importance of inland fisheries to nutritional security in LDCs, as discussed in SOFIA 2020. WWF also strongly welcomes the work of the FAO Inland Fisheries team who have supported the recently published ‘Review of Major Basins and Large Lakes Relevant for Inland Fisheries’ and a forthcoming ‘Risk Assessment for Inland Fisheries’. These pieces of work are critical to understanding inland fisheries and their health in a meaningful ecosystem-scale context. Moving forward, WWF urges FAO to substantially increase the resources dedicated to inland fisheries, further raising their profile, and going beyond recognising risk to examining and highlighting the trade-offs between (for example) ecological flows and inland fisheries, and freshwater connectivity and inland fisheries.

WWF urges FAO to create guidelines for ecosystem based approaches to sustainable inland fisheries management. WWF urges all states to recognise the value of inland fisheries as an essential food source. We also urge all States to sustainably and equitably manage inland fisheries, and monitor their health. States should also recognise and value the importance of the whole catchment ecosystem to maintaining fisheries health. WWF also highlights and supports the launch of the new Inland Fisheries Alliance on the 2nd February whose vision is for a world where inland fisheries are resilient, resourced, and equitably governed as part of sustainable global food systems and healthy aquatic ecosystems. The new Alliance aims to ensure inland fisheries are effectively incorporated into global development and conservation agendas.

Agenda Item 9: Combating Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing

WWF recognises the efforts made by governments to tackle IUU fishing but much more work is needed to effectively address this challenge. IUU fishing activities continue to exacerbate pressure on overfished oceans, pose a threat to biodiversity and ecosystem services, cause economic losses to communities dependent on healthy fish populations and contravene international fisheries law. In response, some countries, trade blocs and Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) have developed import control and catch documentation schemes to deny market access to products sourced illegally.

WWF welcomes the strong policies being unilaterally adopted by many of the large importing markets, including the EU for its ground-breaking approach and the U.S. and Japan for their new seafood import requirements, and encourages others which are at an earlier stage or considering such import control programs. However, the existing schemes differ in how they operate and what information they require, resulting in a lack of alignment and additional bureaucratic burden for importing and exporting countries as well as the industry, creating loopholes which IUU fishing operators can exploit. Harmonization and consistency, allowing key data to be easily exchanged, should be significant factors in program design, so States can more readily achieve the cooperation they frequently talk about.

WWF urges FAO and States to work towards the compatibility of import control schemes, including harmonized key data elements in electronic form to accompany any fisheries product that is imported into a market State to ensure a legal, transparent seafood supply chain.

Harmful fisheries subsidies intensify many problems at the root of the global fisheries crisis, by contributing to and maintaining continue to fuel fleet overcapacity and overfishing, as well as helping and help many perpetrators of IUU fishing continue to violate domestic or international law and undermine efforts to sustainably manage fisheries.

WWF urges governments to first and foremost muster the political will needed to settle the long-standing issue of ending subsidized overfishing and IUU fishing through a comprehensive and binding and effective agreement in the framework of the WTO in 2021, fulfilling their commitment to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goal target 14.6. To achieve this, it will also be vital for government fisheries officials to continue to closely connect with their trade counterparts to coordinate as they proceed with the negotiations.

WWF calls for prohibitions to effectively address subsidies to IUU fishing and those concerning overcapacity and overfishing as well as overfished stocks. For a WTO agreement to be effective, WWF calls on governments to refrain from carving out broad exemptions from the rules. There should be a strong component of technical assistance and capacity building to help countries, in particular Least Developed Countries, address their capacity constraints and help to implement disciplines, ensuring that they establish the necessary legislation and control mechanisms.

WWF calls for prohibitions to effectively address subsidies to IUU fishing and those concerning overcapacity and overfishing as well as overfished stocks., WWF underlines the importance of FAO to continue to provide technical support to fisheries and to the WTO and its Members to support the negotiations.

WWF believes a WTO should in particular address:

- Subsidies for capital costs such as vessel construction and modernization that directly enhance fishing capacity, increasing pressures on stocks and reducing the industry's productivity.
- Subsidies to operating costs, including fuel subsidies, which enhance effort and allow fishermen to continue fishing and overfishing even when it is no longer economic to do so.
- Subsidies that allow fishing on stocks that are overfished. Government funding to promote fishing effort on stocks that are overfished directly furthers stock depletion and prevents recovery.
- Subsidies that contribute to IUU fishing vessels or operators (or beneficial owners), without carve-outs.

There should be a strong component of technical assistance and capacity building to help countries, in particular Least Developed Countries, address their capacity constraints and help to implement disciplines, ensuring that they establish the necessary legislation and control mechanisms.

Agenda Item 10: Developments in global and regional processes related to fisheries and aquaculture

WWF is extremely concerned by reports of [human rights abuses](#) in the fisheries sector, including to fisheries observers. WWF urges FAO to review and acknowledge the recommendations contained in the reports from Human Rights at Sea. WWF urges FAO to establish requirements for comprehensive and transparent reporting of all life threatening injuries or deaths that occur on fishing vessels operating in RFMOs and RMOs, and work with RFMOs and RMOs to develop and adopt formal, binding CMMs on Crew Welfare consistent with ILO 188. WWF supports the initiative to develop international transshipment guidelines or alternatively, a stronger instrument, so unchecked transshipment can no longer facilitate abuse, and frustrate accountability by allowing vessels to stay at sea indefinitely and evade oversight and scrutiny.

Fishing is the single largest in situ activity impacting ocean health. The emerging treaty text for the international legally binding agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) still has a few fundamental issues to be solved by negotiating States. One of the most important is to agree upon how fisheries management on the high seas can be combined with the use of adequate area-based management tools, including marine protected areas (MPAs), as well as environmental impact assessments (EIA) and strategic environmental assessments (SEA), to fulfil globally agreed standards on the conservation and sustainable use of species and habitats affected by fishing.

WWF urges all states to ensure that an enhanced cooperation regime, as well as a process for the designation of MPAs on the high seas, and the routine use of SEAs and EIAs, be elaborated upon in the BBNJ treaty text. Such enhanced cooperation would entail that states members of competent international bodies, such as RFMOs, make their fishery management decisions relevant to implementing decisions of other international bodies, like CBD, CITES, CMS COPs, thus contributing to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Agenda Item 11: Addressing climate change and other environment-related matters in fisheries and aquaculture

WWF calls on FAO to acknowledge the findings of the review paper by [Lam et al 2020](#) on the predicted climate change effects on tropical fisheries and the implications for sustainable development. The paper finds that the maximum catch potential of tropical fish stocks in some tropical exclusive economic zones is projected to decline by up to 40% by the 2050s under the RCP8.5 emissions scenario, relative to the 2000s. The authors propose that climate-driven reductions in fisheries production and alterations in fish-species composition will subsequently increase the vulnerability of tropical countries with limited adaptive capacity. WWF calls on states to recognise that given the billions of people dependent on tropical marine fisheries in some capacity, there is a clear need to account for the effects of climate change on these resources and urgently identify practical adaptations when building climate-resilient sustainable-development pathways.

WWF urges all states to recognise the Nature-based Solutions function of natural coastal infrastructure, such as mangroves, seagrass, coral reefs, shellfish reefs, and the wetlands associated with deltas and estuaries, play a key role in increasing the resilience of economic, social and natural systems to the impacts of climate change and extreme events. WWF urges FAO to recognise that an integrated “Ocean – Food – Climate” approach that prioritises the restoration and regeneration of coastal habitats, is a powerful means of addressing biodiversity loss, delivering sustainable development opportunities to coastal communities and tackling climate change. In addition, if it is delivered as part of a comprehensive approach to building climate and disaster resilience; ensuring environmental sustainability and delivering sustainable blue economy development it will deliver triple bottom line benefits in terms of Nutrition, Mitigation and Resilience.

WWF urges FAO to acknowledge the carbon buffering potential of ocean biomass more broadly, as well as the particular benefits of undisturbed sediment, and these values be incorporated in discussions about the trade-offs associated with various ocean uses and development choices.

WWF urges States and RFMOS to include climate change and ocean acidification effects into their fisheries management, including in integrating such effects into deep sea fisheries environmental impact assessments and in preventing significant adverse impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems. WWF also recommends that States and RFMOs identify and protect climate change and ocean acidification refugia sites and areas capable of acting as refugia sites. Other measures that should be encouraged based on relevant CBD decisions regarding coral reefs and cold water areas include:

- Enhance the resilience of coral reefs and closely associated ecosystems through ecosystem-based adaptation to enable the continued provisioning of goods and services;
- Maintain sustainable livelihoods and food security in reef-dependent coastal communities including for indigenous peoples and local communities;
- Enhance international and regional cooperation (across fisheries authorities/bodies and other sectors) for the conservation and sustainable use of blue carbon ecosystems and areas important for biodiversity and ecosystem services;
- Sustainably manage fisheries for coral reefs and closely associated ecosystems;
- Promote community-based measures, including community rights-based management;

- Adopt new or strengthen existing national legislation/regulation and management measures including on the application of the ecosystem approach to fisheries to address unsustainable fishing, ensuring enforcement and using relevant FAO guidelines;
- Identify and implement multispecies reef fisheries management;
- Sustainably manage key reef fish and invertebrate species populations targeted by export-driven fisheries;
- Prioritize recovery and sustainable management of reef species with key ecological functions.

WWF recognises the efforts of states and regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) to address bycatch but believes far greater ambition and urgency are required. Data paucity remains a significant barrier in comprehending and tackling megafauna bycatch, and WWF urges all states and RFMOs for tuna to significantly increase human and/or electronic observer coverage. In parallel, more action is needed to avoid interactions between fishing gear and marine megafauna (e.g. through spatial and temporal closures), to invest in the research and development of new or modified fishing gear and other approaches to reduce fishing mortality, and to mainstream these where most needed.

WWF is greatly concerned that 68 species of shark are now critically endangered globally according to the IUCN Red List, up from 25 in 2014. In light of this, WWF urges all states and tuna RFMOs to manage catches of sharks using the same precautionary approaches as for high-value stocks of other fishes. WWF welcomes last year's convention text update by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) [AC(HK1)], which expands the Convention's scope for enhanced shark conservation as a positive example of increased prioritisation, and the first joint RFMO meeting on shark bycatch, held in Porto, Portugal Dec 2019.

WWF urges all states to recognise the continued problem of plastic pollution, which despite growing awareness, is only getting worse, and support a new [UN Treaty on Plastic Pollution](#). Fishing gear accounts for roughly 10% of the total plastic debris in the ocean. WWF published a recent report "[What's In The Net](#)", laying out the principles of using camera technology (i.e. remote electronic monitoring) to monitor, and support mitigation of wildlife bycatch in fisheries. WWF urges FAO and states to support and incentivise fishing gear designers and manufactures to innovate new, traceable fishing gear and for fishers to retrieve, if possible, and report any lost gear.

Agenda Item 11.1: Implementation of the FAO Strategy on Biodiversity Mainstreaming across fisheries and aquaculture

Science has never been clearer: IPBES (2019) has described the accelerating nature crisis and its dire consequences. WWF's Living Planet Report 2020 revealed that global populations of mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles and fish have suffered an average two-thirds decline in less than half a century due in large part to the very same environmental destruction which is contributing to the emergence of zoonotic diseases such as COVID-19. The Global Biodiversity Outlook 5 (2020) has shown that countries have collectively failed to fully meet any of the Aichi targets. The report concludes that insufficient commitment is at the root of this failure.

Biodiversity, and the benefits it provides, are fundamental to achieving and sustaining human health, well-being and a healthy planet. It provides needed nature-based solutions to many societal challenges that we are facing. Despite ongoing efforts, biodiversity is deteriorating worldwide and this decline is projected to continue or worsen under business-as-usual scenarios.

Transformative change is urgently needed in our production and consumption patterns, in particular in how we produce and consume our food, but also in other productive sectors, including forestry, fisheries, infrastructure and energy, extractives and manufacturing and the finance sector. These transformations need to be just - costs and benefits need to be shared fairly and equitably - and they need to take place urgently, to limit risks of more and irreversible damage (e.g. species extinction, new pandemics) and higher restoration costs. WWF has developed a discussion paper, the Kunming Plan for Nature and People, which presents WWF's proposals for a transformative, comprehensive and measurable post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) that would be ready for implementation immediately after its adoption.

WWF urges governments to increase the level of ambition in the draft GBF, while ensuring that the drivers of nature loss are addressed. To achieve this, WWF urges States that at a minimum, the elements contained in the Aichi Biodiversity Target 6, as well as SDG 14.4 on sustainable fisheries should be integrated into the GBF, including by committing to: the sustainable management and harvesting of all fish and invertebrate populations and aquatic plants by applying the ecosystem approach to fisheries, with species and ecosystems within healthy biological and ecological limits based on precautionary reference points. Furthermore, overfishing must be halted, and recovery plans and measures shall be in place and fully implemented for all declining stocks so they can rebuild to healthy levels. Fisheries shall not have significant adverse impacts on the marine environment (species, habitats, ecosystem processes).

As noted in the GBO-5, there is a need for better stock assessments (including through reliable and verified catch data) for effective fisheries management. Multi-species assessments/ecosystem models should also be fully integrated in fisheries management, and supported by capacity building and mobilisation of resources to data poor regions.

WWF supports the continued work of the Sustainable Ocean Initiative Global dialogue with regional seas organizations and regional fisheries bodies and other sectoral competent bodies on accelerating progress towards achieving global targets.

Agenda Item 12: Enhancing COFI discussions on fisheries management: Proposal for a new COFI Sub Committee on Fisheries Management

WWF, recognizing that some technical fisheries issues (such as IUU Fishing, SSF and global and regional processes in the fields of fisheries management) are not addressed by the current structure of COFI and its two sub-committees, expresses a favorable opinion for Option C: "To create a specific and new sub-committee on fisheries management". To reduce costs and environmental impact of this decision, WWF suggests to opt for organizational solutions such as those suggested in option A, with the new committee

organized back-to-back with COFI and/or the other existing sub-committees. TORs of the new sub-committee on fisheries management need to be proposed, discussed and finalized with a wider participation and in a transparent manner, including consultations with observers.

If COFI is not ready to endorse the Sub-Committee at this session, we would encourage the establishment of an ad hoc working group, or groups, to begin to carry out this important work at technical level in the interim.

Agenda Item 13: FAO's Programme of Work in fisheries and aquaculture under the FAO Strategic Framework

WWF supports unlocking the great potential of aquatic farming to produce healthy food and minimize and mitigate environmental degradation. WWF urges states to realize this potential by driving conversion free (C-Free) aquatic farming that can help feed the world, enhance livelihoods and conserve nature. Aquatic farming has demonstrated the potential to realize a step-change in availability of nutritious food and biomass without conversion of natural ecosystems while creating viable livelihoods. WWF believe that responsibly managed aquatic farming systems can create highly nutritious food and the potential for viable livelihoods while utilizing aquatic ecosystems in a manner to provide these services in perpetuity. To ensure this potential is delivered while protecting against ecosystem degradation, WWF's priorities for aquatic farming priorities are:

- Aquatic farming products shall be traceable to the farm where it was produced;
- No conversion or degradation of natural habitats for aquatic farming;
- Natural resources (i.e. land, water, energy and wild fish) used to produce aquatic organisms shall be reduced by 25%;
- Aquafeed ingredients shall be transparently shared with producers and the public so that liabilities of illegality or human rights abuse can be mitigated;
- Aquafeeds shall not include "trash fish" and in no way enhance incentives for bycatch;
- Aquafeeds shall not result in the conversion of natural habitat for terrestrial ingredients;
- Seaweed and shellfish farming increased in appropriate sites by 20% to capture and convert excess nutrients and carbon to food biomass;
- Aquatic farming is utilized as a development tool to lift small-scale producers up and out of poverty while maintaining wages that allow for worker savings.